



Conservation Stewardship Program

Opportunities for Central Coast Rangelands - 4/18/2024

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# WHAT IS IT?

- The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a program under the Farm Bill.
- Intended to financially reward producers for good land stewardship and encourages them to continue to adopt additional conservation activities to address resource concerns.
- CSP is for producers who are passionate about conservation and environmental stewardship.

# WHAT IS IT?

- Contracts are for 5 years, with the option to renew after
- Payments are to maintain the existing level of conservation and determined by an NRCS assessment of existing stewardship at the time of enrollment
- Additional payments to implement conservation activities
- Minimum \$4000 yearly payment (\$20,000 over 5 years), Maximum \$200,00 over 5 years
- Eligible lands include private and tribal agricultural lands, cropland, grassland, pastureland, rangeland, and nonindustrial private forest land




# CSP Logistics – Assessment

530.320 I – Nationally Applicable Resource Concern Categories for CSP Assessments

CAET RCs	AQ Impacts	Degraded Plant Condition			Inefficient Energy Use	Livestock Production Limitation	Water Quality Degradation				
CART RC Categories	AQ Emissions	Degraded Plant Condition	Fire Management	Pest Pressure	Inefficient Energy Use	Livestock Production Limitation	Aquatic Habitat	Field Pesticide Loss	Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen Loss	Salt Losses to Water	Storage and Handling of Pollutants
Cropland		X		X				X	X		
Pasture		X		X		X			X		
Range		X	X	X		X			X		
NIPF		X	X	X							
Farmstead					X						
AAL				X							

CAET RCs	Soil Quality Degradation	Insufficient Water	F&W Inadequate Habitat	Excess Water/ Insufficient Water	Soil Erosion	
CART RC Categories	Soil Quality Limitation	Source Water Depletion	Terrestrial Habitat	Weather Resilience	Concentrated Erosion	Wind and Water Erosion
Cropland	X	X	X		X	X
Pasture	X	X	X		X	X
Range	X		X		X	X
NIPF	X		X		X	X
Farmstead			X		X	
AAL			X		X	X

Resource concern categories that the State may require be assessed for CSP or which may be assessed for any operation as applicable.	Resource concern categories not recommended for CSP assessment.	X	Nationally required resource concern categories which must be assessed for CSP to determine eligibility for existing payments.
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## CSP Classic Report

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Planner Name: JACQUELINE CHARBONNEAU  
 Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assessment Name: CSP 2023- V2  
 Date: 05/04/2023

### Range Groups

Range Groups Assessed Tract/Land Units		
Range Groups Assessed	Assessed Tract / Land Units	Acres
Natural Grasslands	1909/1,390/1,6188/3,6251/1,6459/1,6760/1,6762/1,6842/3,6843/2	7096.22

Stewardship Threshold Land Use: Range		Range Groups	
		Natural Grasslands	
RC Categories	State PRC	Time of Application	End of Contract
Aquatic habitat		Not Met	Not Met
Concentrated erosion		Met	Met
Degraded plant condition		Met	Met
Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss		Met	Met
Fire management		Not Met	Not Met
Livestock production limitation		Not Met	Not Met
Pest pressure		Not Met	Not Met
Soil quality limitations		Not Met	Not Met
Terrestrial habitat		Met	Exceeds
Wind and water erosion		Met	Met
<b>Totals: State PRC RC Categories</b>		0	0
<b>Totals: Non-State PRC RC Categories</b>		0	0
<b>Grand Totals:</b>		5	5

\* = Value is a result of an assessment override

**Stewardship Threshold Eligibility**

1. Applicant meets at least two RCCs at the time of application on all land uses and all land use groups?
2. Applicant meets at least three RCCs at the time of application on at least one land use, or, when all land uses only have two RCCs met at time of application, applicant meets a third RCC by the end of the contract on at least one land use?
3. Applicant meets the stewardship threshold eligibility? (Answer "Yes" if Q1 and Q2 are "Yes")

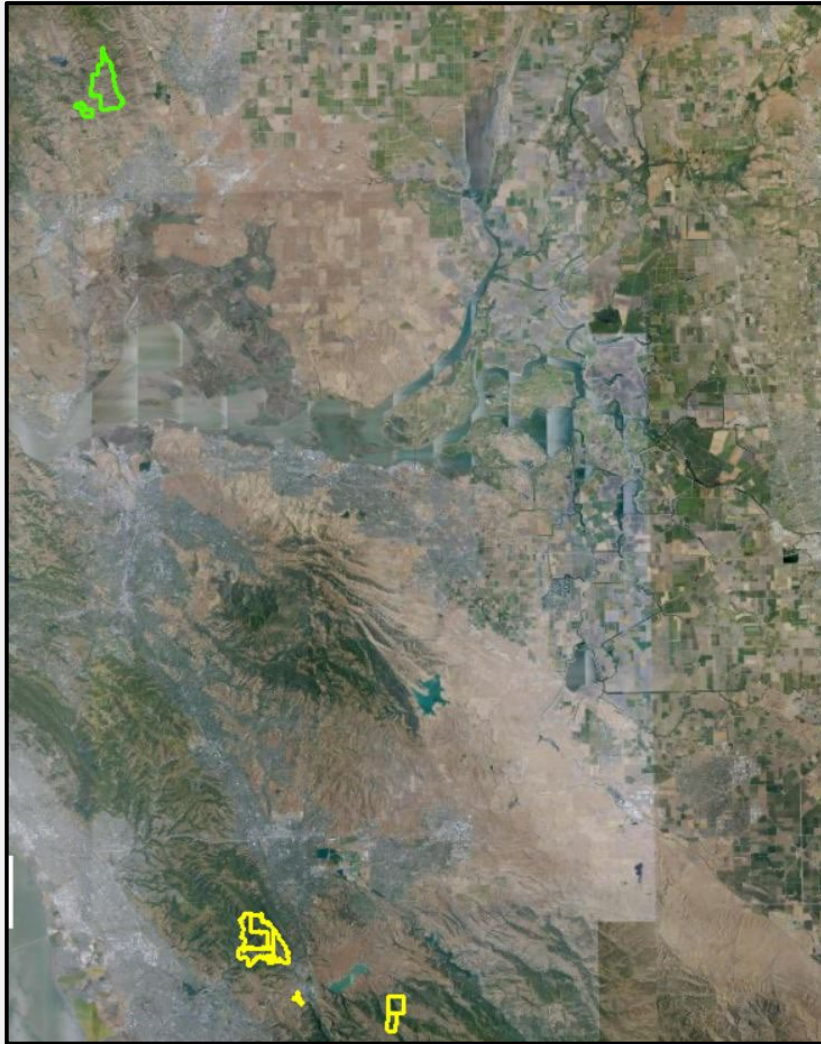
# Rangeland Example Wildlife Focus

- Client has been working with us since 2017 – started as a “Beginning Rancher”
- Successful completion of three extensive EQIP contracts in Alameda County and one in San Mateo County addressing multiple resource concerns, most notably wildlife habitat and livestock water.





# Entire Operation: 7,096 Acres



County	Acres	Private/Public?
Alameda	870	Private
Alameda	1238	Public
Alameda	322	Private
Alameda	589	Private
Alameda	58	Public
Alameda	789	Public
Alameda	695	Public
Napa	2411	Public

# CSP Logistics – Assessments Tools

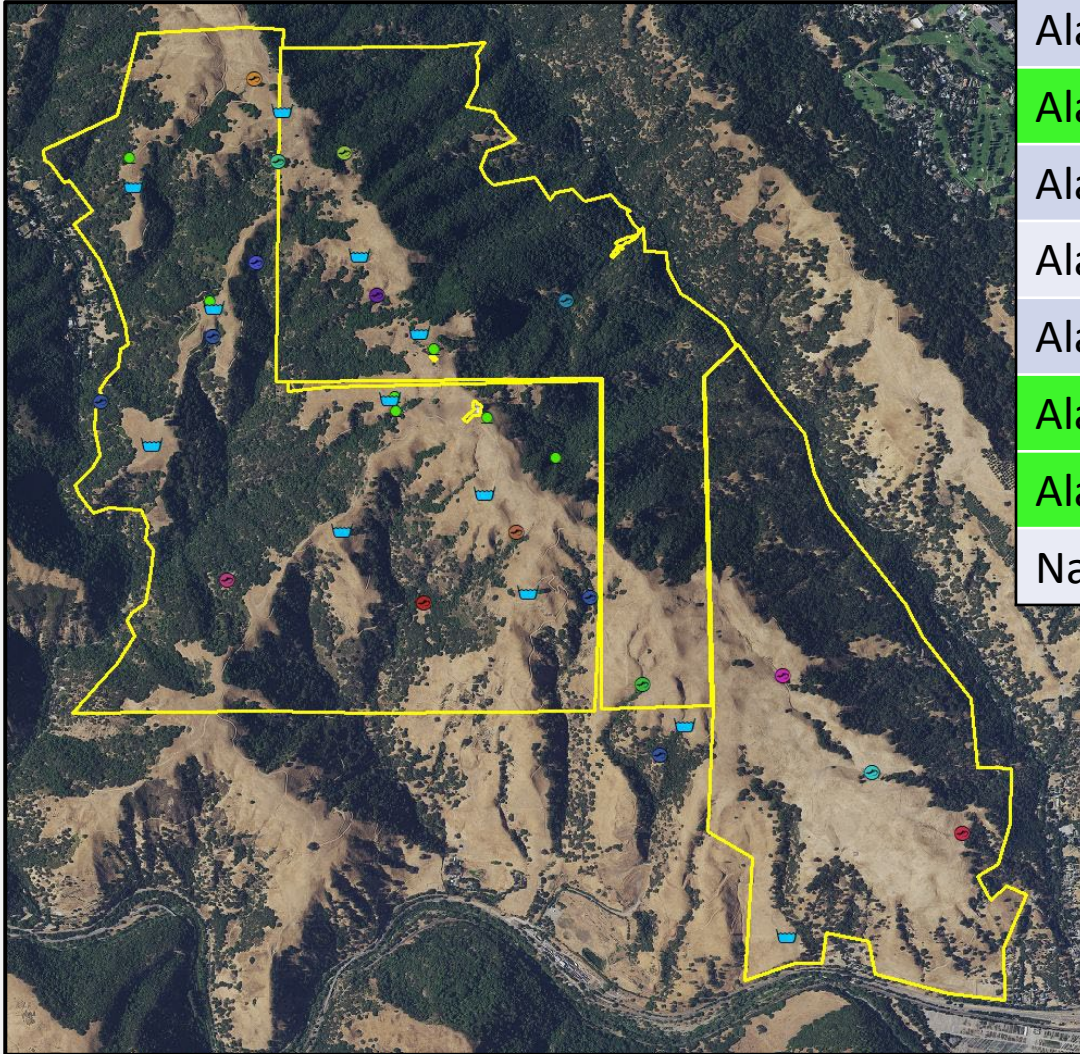
- Assessments need to be done on entire operation
- Definitely need to spend time with your NRCS planner

Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health Version 5 Evaluation Form (page 2)				
Evaluation area name or ID:		Date:		
Departure from Expected	Code	Instructions		
None to slight	N-S	(1) Assign 17 indicator ratings, record comments and any measurements.		
Slight to moderate	S-M	(2) In the attribute rating tables at the bottom of the form, write the indicator number in the appropriate column for each indicator applicable to the attribute.		
Moderate	M	(3) Assign overall rating for each attribute based on preponderance of evidence.		
Moderate to extreme	M-E	(4) Provide rationale for each attribute rating in writing.		
Extreme to total	E-T			
Indicator	Rating	Comments		
1. Rills	S   H			
2. Water flow patterns	S   H			
3. Pedestals and/or terracettes	S   H			
4. Bare ground (observed): ____ %	S   H			
5. Gullies	S   H			
6. Wind-scoured and/or depositional areas	S			
7. Litter movement (wind or water)	S			
8. Soil surface resistance to erosion Interspace: ____ Plant canopy: ____	S   H   B			
9. Soil surface loss and degradation	S   H   B			
10. Effects of plant community composition and distribution relative to infiltration	H			
11. Compaction layer	S   H   B			
12. Functional/structural groups	B			
a. Relative dominance: _____				
b. F/S groups not expected at the site: _____				
c. Number of F/S groups: _____				
d. Spp # in dom & subdom F/S groups: _____				
13. Dead or dying plants or plant parts	B			
14. Litter cover and depth Observed cover: ____ % Depth: ____ cm / in	H   B			
15. Annual production: Pounds or Kilograms Observed: ____ ÷ Expected ____ = ____	B			
16. Invasive plants	B			
17. Vigor with an emphasis on reproductive capability of perennial plants	B			
Soil/Site Stability "S" (10 indicators)		Hydrologic Function "H" (10 indicators)		Biotic Integrity
Attribute Rating:	Rationale:	Attribute Rating:	Rationale:	Attribute Rating:
E T M E M S M N S		E T M E M S M N S		E T M E M S

Operation Name						0		Farm No.	0				
Date								Tract No.	0				
Designated Conservationist						0		Acres	0				
Grassland and Savannah Habitat Elements (Clear form using the <<delete key>>)						Points	Field #	Benchmark Acres	Benchmark Points	Benchmark Weighted Points	Planned Acres	Planned Points	Planned Weighted Points
<b>1. Species Composition</b>													
Number/kinds of plant species onsite represent >80% of the number/kinds typical of natural site conditions. Desirable plants are still abundant.						1.0							
Number/kinds of plant species onsite represent >60-79% of the number/kinds typical of natural site conditions. Desirable plants are still abundant.						0.7							
Number/kinds of plant species on site is between 40-59% of the number/ kinds typically expected for the natural site.						0.5							
Number and kinds of plant species represent between 21-39% of the potential native plant community for the natural site. Undesirable plants are abundant.						0.3							
Site is predominantly occupied by plant species not native to natural site conditions. Native plants have mostly been replaced by undesirable plants.						0.1							
Comments:								Acres		Weighted Points	Acres		Weighted Points
								0.0		0.00	0.0		0.00
<b>2. Invasive Species (invasive plants estimated as percent cover)</b>													
Invasive species <5%, but appear controlled						1							
Invasive plants between 5-10% appear controlled						0.7							
Invasive plants 11-15%, but appear controlled						0.5							
Invasive plants 16-30%						0.3							
Invasive plants greater than 30%						0.1							



# Upland Wildlife Habitat (E645D): 2,270 Acres



County	Acres	Private/Public?
Alameda	870	Private
Alameda	1238	Public
Alameda	322	Private
Alameda	589	Private
Alameda	58	Public
Alameda	789	Public
Alameda	695	Public
Napa	2411	Public



# Required Measures

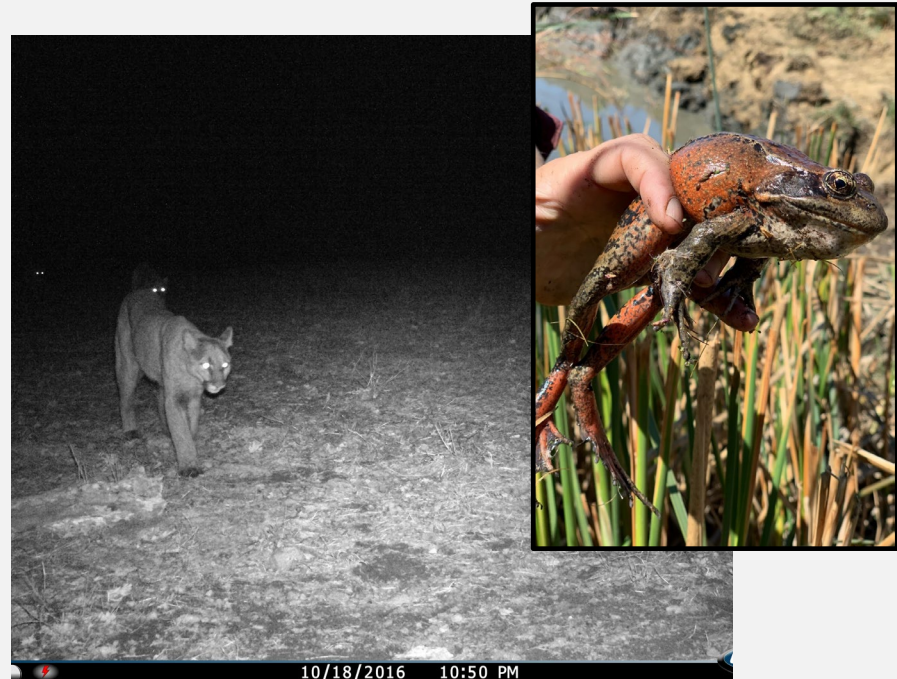
- Planned Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide score will exceed 0.5
- No nitroguanidine neonicotinoids
- No insecticides allowed from February 1 – September 30<sup>th</sup>
- Insecticides
- Herbicides
- Rodenticides
- Toxic or suffocating gases
- Capped Pipes
- Escape ramps/Water Accessibility
- Disturbance
- Monitoring



# Monitoring Requirements

- Properties in excess of 2,000 acres require one location per 1,000 acres for each plant community present. Total monitoring requirements not to exceed 18 occurrences for every 2,000 acres, regardless of number or plant communities or crop types.

- 2700 acres
- 2 plant communities
- 6 monitoring points total





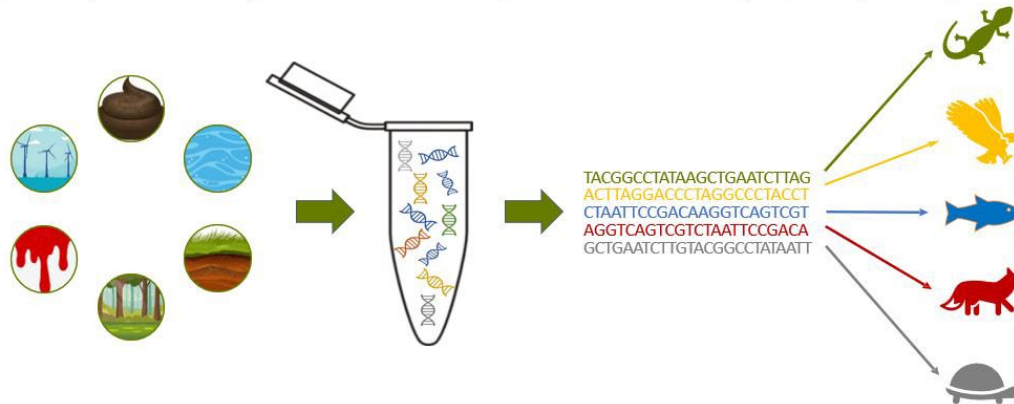
# Monitoring: Wildlife Cameras & eDNA (& more)



## Monitoring: eDNA

### Metabarcoding: Biodiversity Analysis

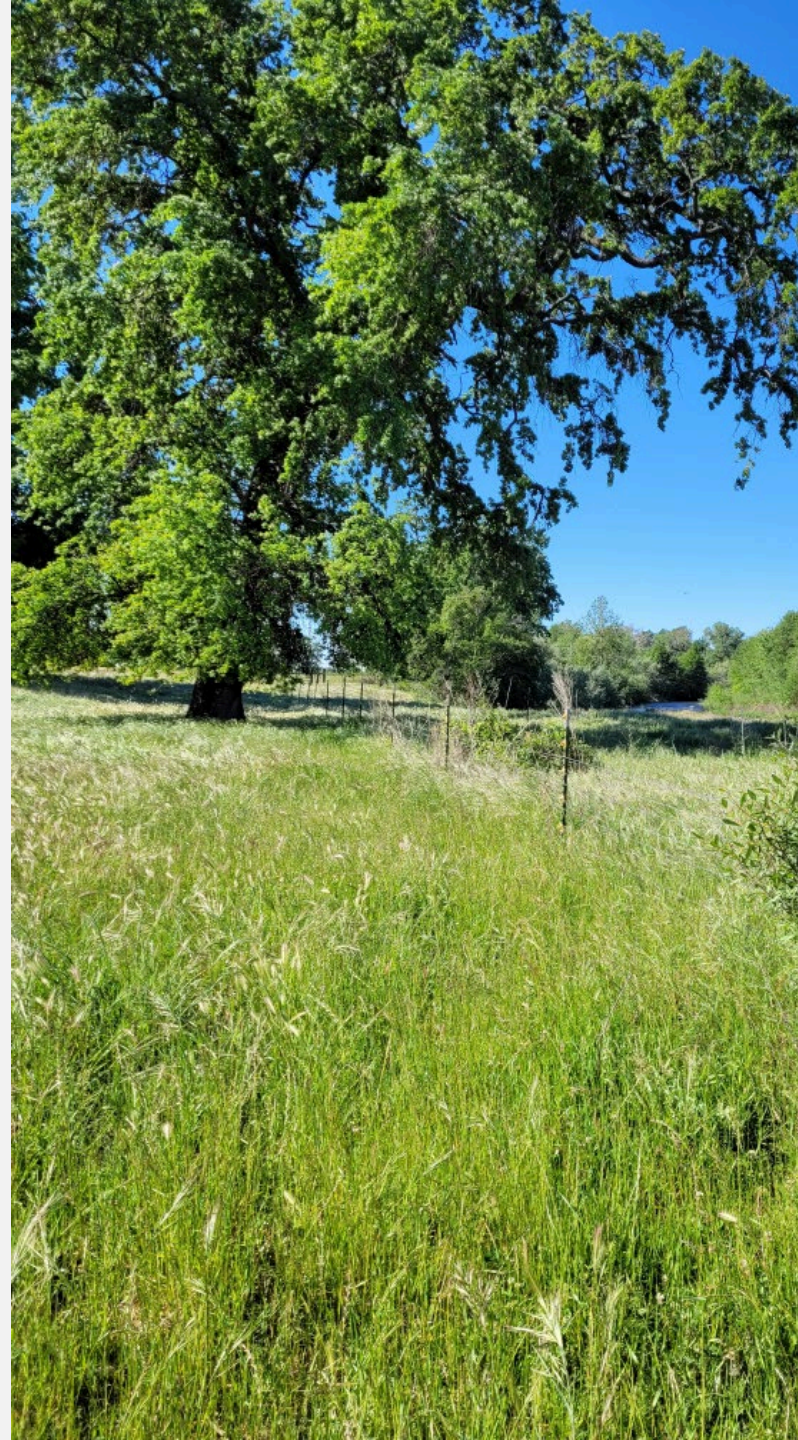
eDNA is processed, sequenced, and then compared to a DNA library to identify the organism.





# Grazing Management Enhancements

- Need to have a grazing plan in place **before** enhancements are scheduled/implemented
- If no grazing plan in place, then plan Prescribed Grazing practice first, or in conjunction with first grazing management enhancement\*
  - \*Depends on the enhancement\**
- Pay attention to what is in the NRCS criteria, documentation and implementation requirements – CRITERIA & DELIVERABLES are key
- Many require a Certified Professional in Range Management, or some type of equivalent prior to implementation
- Goal is to make adjustments to current grazing system - that is what we are paying on for enhancements (not for just the status quo)





# Grazing Management Examples – (there are many more than this)

## Herd Health, Rangeland Health



- 528Q – Body Conditioning Score – Monthly! \*
- 528A – Maintaining quantity and quality of forage for animal health and productivity - NUTBAL
- E528N – Improved grazing management through monitoring activities \*
- E528L - Prescribed grazing that improves or maintains riparian and watershed function-erosion\*

***\*Grazing management plan required for these enhancements\****  
***Read and discuss the enhancement requirements!!***

# Final Thoughts

- Why this Client is a good fit for CSP
- Really understand what you are signing up for and don't over-commit
- Put in the initial work with your NRCS Planner to think about enhancements that would work for you
- Deliverables
  - Not things that are already being done (can't fake it)

